

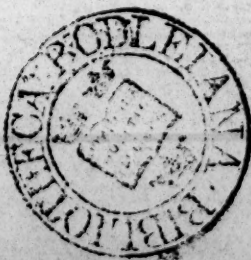
A
COMPARISON
BETWEEN
YORK AND LINCOLN
MINSTERS.

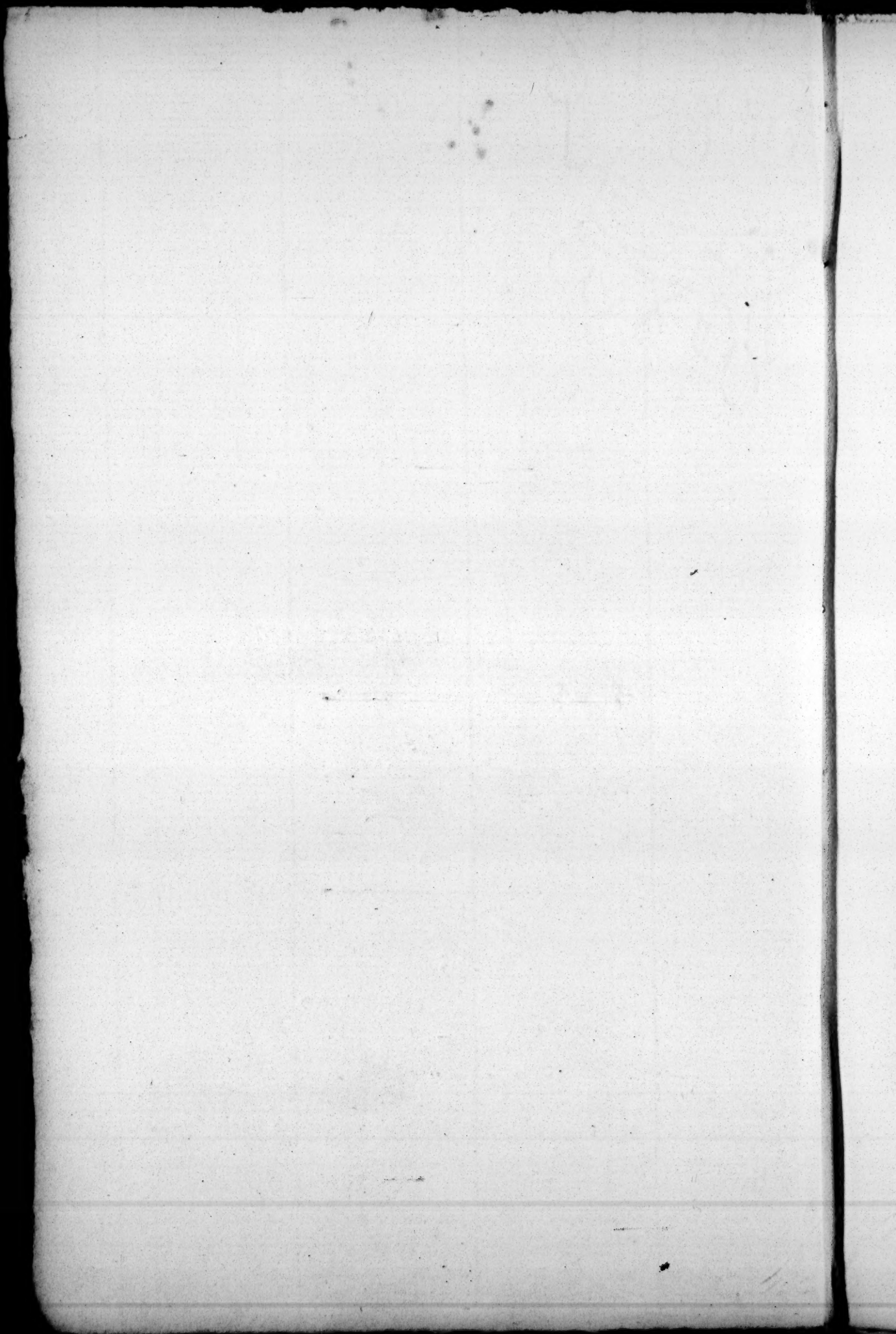
BY
DANIEL DE FOE,
IN HIS
TOUR THROUGH GREAT-BRITAIN.



York :
PRINTED BY WILLIAM BLANCHARD.

Anno 1800.





A COMPARISON BETWEEN

YORK AND LINCOLN

MINSTERS,

AS COPIED FROM DANIEL DE FOE'S TOUR
THROUGH GREAT-BRITAIN.

THE City of Lincoln contends with this of York, for a preference to its CATHEDRAL, and as this is a point in which both Cities are very tenacious, I will distinguish the particulars, wherein each of them have the advantage over the other. In the first place then, Lincoln Cathedral has greatly the advantage of York in the height of its situation; and by different accounts, given by several Authors, of the dimensions of both Churches, it appears, Lincoln exceeds York in length, from East to West, either fourteen, or eleven, or three feet and a half; in the middle cross or transept, from North to South, five feet; in the outward breadth of the West End, by the addition of two Chapels, as at St. Paul's, London, fifty-three feet; in the height of the

West Towers and Spires, seventy-two feet ; and of the Middle Tower, including the Pinnacles, seventy-five feet.

York exceeds Lincoln in breadth of its Middle Nef, and Side Aisles, within side, twenty-six feet ; in the height of the Middle Nef to its Canopy, seventeen feet ; and in the inside of the Middle Lantern, sixty-four feet and a half.

The breadth of the West end of Lincoln will not the least avail in this dispute, as it has so many egregious defects, not to say absurdities. The two Steeples are crowded together, instead of being placed at the extremities of the front, which by that means would have had an appearance much more grand. They rise up above the body of the Church, as if behind a screen, without the least affinity to any part of the building below. The ornaments are but mean, and the leaden spires upon them still meaner. The whole front, extending in a straight line, want boldness when viewed at some distance ; and there is such an expansion of solid wall, without windows or any sort of aperture, as gives an heaviness throughout. The cloistered work or niches for Images, which is the chief ornamental part of Gothic structures, is disposed with a shameful disregard to every thing like design : In one place, crowded with needless profusion ; in another, wanted to fill up where

now there is nothing but a naked and dead space ; and in the ornaments the fancy is so irregularly varied, that all kind of connexion and harmony is destroyed, so that the building, to appearance, has the same effect, as if it were pieces of different structures patched up together.

The plan of the Church is very irregular; the middle transept from North to South having no aisles on the West side to answer those on the East. The under transept or double cross, can never be considered as a beautiful addition, especially since this, and the Eastern parts beyond are surrounded with Chapels and Vestries erected without uniformity, and the windows of the Church are meanly small, crowded, and out of proportion.

It is to be observed, there is a great resemblance between the ground plat of Lincoln, and that of Canterbury; and the one was certainly built after the model of the other.

The only defect objected to York, is that the middle tower or lantern wants height, and that the cross transept, from North to South, is built in a different stile and manner from the rest of the Cathedral, both these must be admitted to be faults ; but by the way, the middle lantern is as lofty as the celebrated Towers of Canter-

bury and Gloucester, exclusive of their pinnacles, though not sufficiently high in proportion to its breadth, being seventy feet square, or to the height of the Church. They have a tradition in the City, that a Wooden Spire was once intended to have been raised upon this tower ; which in that case would have exceeded the height of Salisbury steeple, as the present battlements are higher by six feet, and of a larger square than the present tower at Salisbury. I am not sorry this project failed, because it is obvious all wooden spires have a most wretched aspect.

The only amendment that can be made, would be to pull down the bell turret at the corner, and to raise the battlements about twenty feet more.

However, this building has two remarkable beauties not to be found in any other Gothic Edifice ; which are, that the height and breadth of the nef and side aisles of the Church, and of all the arches and windows, come very near, if not agree with, the dimensions laid down by the established rules of Roman Architecture ; that the span of the roof from East to West, rises very near equal to the modern proportion ; the excessive height of the roofs being the chief blemishes in most Cathedrals, as may be seen at Lincoln, Salisbury, Westminster, and particularly Winchester.

The plan of the whole Church is uniform as well as the super-structure, especially from East to West: the windows are of a size and distance proper to the magnitude of the structure, and are admirable for their workmanship; neither is it crowded and incumbered on the outside by its buttresses, but every part is enriched with ornaments, which receive an additional beauty from the colour of the stone, as it still retains almost its original whiteness.

Thus far what I have said of this building in general was necessary, in comparing it with Lincoln. I will now take some notice of its several parts distinctly, both within-side and without, beginning first at the outside.

The West End is 124 feet in breadth, shews an inexpressible grandeur: the front contains two uniform towers, diminished by several contractions, all cloistered for imagery, and enriched with other ornaments. In the South tower hangs a deep peal of twelve Bells, the tenor weighing 59 hundred weight.*

* In the year 1765, the twelve bells were taken down, not being quite tuneable, and were replaced in the same year by a set of ten new Bells, cast by Mess. Lester and Pack of London, (the same weight and dimensions of those in Bow Church, London.) This Peal is allowed to be, in every respect, as complete as any in the Kingdom.

Between the towers, over the principal entrance into the Church, is a large Window, whose tracery in mason's work is of a figure so beautiful, that is not equalled any where. The several windows in the towers are large, and their tracery and ornaments well fancied.

The South entrance is ascended by several courses of steps, and tradition assures us, there was once as great an ascent to the West door. Here a remarkable spiral turret is erected on the middle of the pediment, and called the Fiddler's Turret, from an image of a fiddler on the top. Over the door is a Dial, both horary and solar, on each side of which two Images strike the quarters on two bells.*

In viewing the building from this part Eastwards, we easily discerned it to be much newer than that Westward, though conformable to it.

The East front is exceedingly noble, and has the finest Window in the World.

The Lantern Steeple, of which I have spoken already, is ornamented in a fine taste, wanting nothing but a better finishing at the top: It has eight windows, two on

* These were some years ago taken down, and a new Clock put up.

each side, to give light within ; these windows, from top to bottom, are 45 feet high.

We now entered the inside—at the West door, opening into the middle Nef of the Church, under the largest Gothic Arch in Europe, which binds and supports the two towers. The Nef is the most spacious of any in Europe, except St. Peter's at Rome, it exceeds the dimensions of the nef of St. Paul's Cathedral, 4 feet six inches in width, and 11 feet in height ; and that of Westminster Abbey, 16 feet 6 inches in breadth ; but its height is two feet less. This is an instance of what I took notice of before, with regard to the justness of the proportion of York Cathedral ; and at the same time shews the extravagance of that of Westminster Abbey, in this particular. The Canopy at top is enriched with curious knots of carving.*

* The Ceiling of the Roof of the Cathedral began to be repaired, and the whole of the inside of the Church cleaned and beautified early in the year 1795, and which has been lately finished in a most complete and elegant style.—This afforded an opportunity to an ingenious artist of this city, Mr. Joseph Hallspenny, to give a faithful delineation of the many pieces of curious workmanship, which, by reason of their great distance from the ground were nearly hid from the public eye. These, with many other curious and beautiful monuments of Gothic Sculpture in other parts of the Church, are delineated on 105 copper-plates, and with appropriate letter-press illustrations, were lately published, entitled, *Gothic Ornaments of the Cathedral Church of York*, Price 6l. 6s.

From thence we proceeded to the middle Lantern, to a stone-screen that parts the choir from the body of the church, adorned with curious workmanship; among which are placed the statues of the British Kings, from William the First to Henry Sixth.*

Over the entrance into the Choir stands the Organ, having a double front; it had before been removed from thence by King Charles I. to one side, opposite the Bishop's Throne. The reason his Majesty gave for doing it was, that it spoiled the prospect of the fine East window from the body of the Church.

The Choir is adorned with ancient wood-work carved, and set up with clusters of knotted pinnacles of different heights. The ascent from the body of the church, through the Choir to the Altar, is by a gradation of sixteen steps. The Altar has lately received a considerable improvement as to its situation, and the whole Church in its beauty, by taking away a large wooden-screen, which almost obstructed the view of the East Window. By this means it was carried one arch farther back, to a stone-screen of excellent Gothic Architecture, which now not only shews a beauty in itself, before

* Taken from the ruins of the Monastery Church in the Manor.

hid, but opens a view to one of the noblest lights in the world, both for Masonry and Glazing, which is the fore-mentioned East Window.

This window is 30 feet 9 inches broad, and 75 feet high. The upper part is a piece of fine tracery, but, in my opinion, not so beautiful as that at the West end. Below the tracery are 117 partitions, wherein is represented, in fine painted glass, most of the History of the Bible. This window was glazed in 1405, by one John Thornton, glazier, of Coventry, who received for his own work 4s. a week, and contracted to finish the whole in three years.

In a circular Window, at the South end of the Church, is another fine piece of masonry, in the form of a wheel, called the Marigold Window, from its painted glass, which resembles the colour of that flower. The North end has five noble lights, each constitutes one large window, and reaches almost from top to bottom. There is a tradition, that five Maiden Sisters were at the expence of these lights. The painting of the glass represents a kind of embroidery or Mosaic needle-work; which might perhaps give occasion to the story.

I ought not to omit mentioning, that all the Windows of the Church, except one or two, are adorned with

painted glafs, representing the Sacred History, and Portraits of eminent Perfons. This painting was preferved at the time of the Civil Wars, by the Lord Fairfax, General of the Parliament's Army, who, at the request of the Gentry and Citizens of York, placed a guard of foldiers about the Church for that purpofe.

The Body of the Church was fome years ago new paved according to a plan drawn by that ingenious architect Mr. Kent, under the direction of the late Earl of Burlington; the figure is Mosaic, and properly adapted to a Gothic building.

The Monuments in this Church are numerous, many of them ancient and feveral very magnificent.

After taking this view of the Cathedral, we were conducted into the Chapter-Houfe; a building, which, for a Gothic piece, difdains to allow an equal in the univerfe, and well deferves the encomium beftowed upon it; as is faid by a great traveller, in an old Monkish verfe infcribed on the wall, in golden letters, as follows:

Ut rofa phlos phlorum, fic eft domus ifta domorum.

As fhines the Rose above all meaner flowers,
So above common Piles this Building towers.

It is an octagon of 63 feet diameter ; the height to the middle knot of the roof is 67 feet 10 inches, unsupported by any pillars, and entirely dependant on a pin, geometrically placed in the centre. The whole roof has been richly painted, and the knots of carved work gilt; but now defaced and sullied by time. Over the roof is a spire of timber work, covered with lead, admired as a masterly piece of work in the Carpenters' Art. The eight squares of the octagon have each a window beautifully adorned, and embellished with painted glafs.

The next place we saw was the Vestry Room, its dimensions 44 feet by 22, wherein are kept several antiquities, particularly the famous Horn, so called, made of an Elephant's Tooth; which is, indeed, the greatest piece of antiquity the Church can exhibit, and to which they ought to pay an high veneration, on account of the benefit they reap from the act that it witnessed to. The account Camden gives of it is, that Ulphus the son of Tolardus, who governed in the West parts of Deira, by reason of a difference likely to happen betwixt his eldest son and his youngest, about his Lordship, when he was dead, presently took this course: without delay he went to York, and taking the Horn, wherein he was wont to drink, with him, he filled it with wine, and kneeling before the Altar, bestowed upon God and the blessed St. Peter, all his Lands.

The Lands are still called the *Terra Ulphi*. The Horn was imagined to have been quite lost; but Thomas Lord Fairfax was the occasion of its being preserved: where it had lain, or where he got it, is uncertain; but stripped of its golden ornaments, it was restored by his successor. It has been new decorated, and a Latin inscription put upon it, in English thus:

“Ulphus, Prince of the West part of Deira, formerly dedicated this Horn, together with all his Lands and Revenues: being lost or stolen, Henry Lord Fairfax at length recovered it, and the Dean and Chapter repaired it, in the year 1675.”

I will now conclude my account of this noble Pile of building, with the character given of it (as Mr. Camden informs us) by Æneas Silvius, afterwards Pope Pius II. It is, says he, famous for its magnificence and workmanship, all the world over, but especially for a fine light-some Chapel, with shining walls, and small thin-waisted pillars, quite round. The South side of the church is enriched by a Library, to which Archbishop Matthews's widow was a great benefactress; a Bishop was her Father; and an Archbishop her Father-in Law; she had four Bishops for her brethren; and an Archbishop for her second husband.

In the Archbishop's Registry and Prerogative Office is a noble repository of ancient Ecclesiastical Records,

bearing date 93 years earlier than any at Lambeth or Canterbury.

N. B. By a late alteration of the Roof over the South Entrance, the splendid Marigold Window is now fully exhibited to view, which before was in part hid. De Foe has omitted to take notice of the curious gallery which traverses the middle of the grand East Window, from which is a fine perspective view of the Minster; and the curious eye may discover variety of other beauties in this rich incomparable edifice, not herein noticed.



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